

that darkened the air, the scantiness and impurity of the water supply, with the Thames an open sewer the recurring pestilences of enteric fever and small pox the chronic tuberculosis and rheumatism the perpetual ill-health and appalling infantile mortality of the London of my childhood cannot be imagined to-day. There were not schools for even half the boys and girls, and such as there were (apart from a few ancient foundations that were out of my reach) were more rudimentary than would now be thought possible. The only 'social services' that I remember were the national museums and picture galleries, the Royal Parks, and the blue clad police, who, a generation previously, had been forced on the Metropolis by Sir Robert Peel. The next quarter of a century saw much improvement under the Metropolitan Board of Works and the School Board, but of a London civic consciousness there was still next to nothing.\*

Such were the conditions he early determined to help to change. They were, with but small variation, the conditions still in existence when he became, in 1892, a member of London's new County Council. The establishment of that Council he had hailed as an event of far-reaching importance, and immense potentialities. Until then, there was no single responsible body to look after London's needs with the result that so far as the life of its ordinary, and, above all, of its poorer citizens, went, it was far behind the more progressive municipalities of the Midlands and the North. Not poverty and degradation only, but dirt, insanitation, public disease and public ignorance had been revealed by the Booth Enquiry of 1886, that Enquiry powerfully stimulated, in minds like his, the sense of local as well as of national patriotism.

It was  
intolerable that London should actually be  
what we now  
call a "backward area" This civic pride and  
civic  
patriotism, was with him, a potent motive  
In some  
ways, though he may look continental, he is *an*  
*fond* very  
British, responds to motives and feelings that  
do not  
animate the typical "advanced" mind This  
instinctive

<sup>1</sup>*St Martin's Review*, 1928